
Communications Programs

Governors State University • College of Arts & Sciences • Division of Liberal Arts

COMS 561 TECHNOLOGY AND HUMAN COMMUNICATION

SYLLABUS

Fall 2009

INSTRUCTOR: Sheree Y. Sanderson, M.A., CCSP
Send email correspondence via WebCT only.
CLASS LOCATION: Lecture/Discussion B2203
OFFICE HOURS: Virtual : Tuesdays 3-5 p.m. – WebCT
Physical: Wednesdays 3-5 p.m. (plus arranged) Office: E2582 *Confirmed Appointments*
always suggested. Call 708-235-3956 or leave message in voice mail or e-mail.

Texts required:

- Crowley & Heyer, *Communication in History: Technology, Culture, Society (5th Edition)*, New York: Longman: 2008
- Other handouts provided in class.

General Texts recommended for further reading (some in paperback):

Negroponte, *Being Digital*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995.
Burnham, *Rise of the Computer State* (computers and privacy)
Dizard, *The Coming Information Age* (telecommunications)
Dreyfus & Dreyfus, *Mind Over Machine* (artificial intelligence)
Levinson, *Digital McLuhan*
Meyrowitz, *No Sense of Place* (effect of media)
Postman, N., *Technopoly* (critique of culture of technology)
Toffler, *Powershift* (changes in the way power is distributed)
Toffler, A. *The Third Wave* (changes in technology over ages)
Williams, F. *Technology and Communication Behavior* (general)
Turkle, *The Second Self* (computers effect on self image)
Turkle, *Life on the Screen*
Williams, *The Communication Revolution* (general).

Internet Resources:

Internet resources and links in Communications Studies assembled by the GSU library can be found at <http://libguides.govst.edu/comm>.

In this class, teaching/learning methodologies will vary. Consider also the telephone, fax, e-mail and attachments, blogs and postings to web pages as important communications tools.

Class Objectives:

Students will gain knowledge and skills related to human communications and technology by:

1. Understanding and distinguishing between communications cultures and practice from oral tradition through media and the information age;
2. Developing or reinforcing fundamental skills, as well as gaining new skills, utilizing the internet and world wide web to develop knowledge about the subject matter of the course;
3. Considering critically the impact of communications/information technologies on specific areas of human communications and functioning including:
 - the workplace
 - schools or education
 - home (or optionally internationally)
4. Investigating in depth an area of social, government or business institution impacted by technology.

Class assignments & evaluation:

Students will be evaluated on five criteria: *(NB: there are no exams!)*

1. three short papers of 3–5 pages each.
2. a series of basic and painless Internet assignments
3. work group project
4. one research (term) paper, and
5. class participation including mini assignments.
6. **Graduate students** will be expected to relate their research paper to a specific field of communication theory/study (how does communication technology impact on interpersonal, intercultural, international, organizational or mass/mediated communication).

These assignments will be used to assess your understanding and ability to apply concepts from readings and class lectures/discussion.

Assignment Detail:

1. Each student will prepare **three short papers** of 3–5 pages each, for class discussion and submission. Papers will be mini-thought/research papers based upon conclusions from class readings and **at least three other sources for each paper**. (Students are also encouraged to scour the Internet for material for supporting ideas presented in papers.) Papers will be graded on how well they discuss and apply assigned readings and researched sources to the impact of communication technology in the workplace, the school, the home, and (as an option for the last paper) internationally. (Footnote using APA or other standard style manual)

During the first half of the class each student will become familiar with the Internet/WWW by doing the following (*note: the instructor will pace the activities described and confirm them in class during these weeks.*):

- a. send and receive e-mail to instructor and other students by responding to the instructor mini polls.
 - b. Perform a search on a selected topic printing out first two pages of results of your final efforts. (Subsequently access sites on the WWW and use research data from WWW alternate sources for papers (begin with <http://www3.govst.edu/commcentral/> and a chosen search engine. See Northern Light (www.northernlight.com) or other engines such as Yahoo, Google, Webcrawler, Lycos, Infoseek, AltaVista, Hotbot, etc. Also look at Communications Studies Resources prepared by the library at <http://libguides.govst.edu/comm>.
 - c. Topic discussion via WebCT. Post a discussion supporting your position, respond to two other posts, agree to disagree and defend your theory.
 - d. Attempt to discover and use at least one other net tool/resource by creating a Blog. We will use Google's Blog site, <http://www.blogger.com/start>.
 - e. Send an e-mail to the instructor by end of week 9 (November 9), with your Blog address.
3. Each student will propose and do a final research term research paper (7-10 pages in length with a minimum of 5 sources) investigating in depth an area of social, government, political, religious, economic, legal or business institution impacted by technology. The proposal submitted in a paragraph or two will include 2-3 references/resources of the kind to be used or which inspired this proposed paper. The paper may relate to a specific technology, technology generally, or some phenomena related to communications/information technology in the context of the area of impact chosen and should be appropriately footnoted. A general outline of two parts would typically include:

(Footnote using APA style Electronic references i.e. web or otherwise, must be fully footnoted and the URL (web address) should lead to a specific page, not merely a home page.)

- a. The first (and typically shorter) part should elaborate on the paper's issue or theme defining the area being researched. (Whether you are, for example, investigating a social, government, or business institutions as socially impacted by communication technology; a human behavior with regards technology; or the social impact of a communication technology). This section should: trace the history of the issue, technology, etc. generally, from its inception to the present. This part should also consider the social impact of the change—how interpersonal, social and/or political communication has been affected.

- b. The second part of the paper must examine what is currently happening in the area you have selected—what is the present state of the technology or the nature of the problem. Then, critically evaluate the situation **and project trends for the future indicating future social impact**. Graduate students should also relate this to a specific theory or approach to communication/media studies.
4. Class participation is an important component of this class will be evaluated according to the quality and relevance of participation in discussions. Readings assigned or developed should inform the discussion and student participation.

Assignment completion:

All assignments are to be completed before the class period for which they are due—**late assignments will not be accepted**. Short papers are to be ready on the date due for class discussion. Final papers are due on the last class **December 7**; students should be prepared for a summary discussion. All research papers must be turned in no later than Monday, December 7 to be included in grade submittal by the instructor's deadline.

Grades

Grades are based upon the following breakdown:

1. Three short papers @ 10 points each = 30 points (*content is the key but writing will influence, as will informed discussion research provides.*)
2. Internet/WWW assignments and report = 25 points
3. Work Group Project = 20
4. Final research paper = 20 points
5. Class participation = 5 points: 5 = regular, 3 = often, 2 = occasional. (*quality of discussion counts and will influence this component based on insight, responsiveness to the discussion, subject and focus, creativity and appropriateness.*)

Total = 100 points)

Grading Scale

100 – 90 = A

89 – 80 = B

79 – 70 = C

69 – 60 = D

59 – Below = F

Bonus – In addition to above, students may receive extra points depending on quality of extra credit assignment. Extra points are awarded only if the student has completed all papers, not just substituting for one of the short papers.

Academic Honesty - Attributing Sources and University Policy:

All work submitted for academic credit is expected to be the student's own work. Verbatim quotes and paraphrases from sources should be appropriately, completely and accurately footnoted. Failure to properly attribute, or footnote, material collected from other sources, whether intentional or not, is considered plagiarism and may result in severe academic penalties ranging from a failing grade to dismissal from the University

Incompletes:

Incompletes are given only in special circumstances, and only if a student has completed at least half of the semester's work.

Disability Statement:

Students, who have a disability or special needs and require accommodation in order to have equal access to the classroom, must register with the designated staff member in the Division of Student Development. Please go to room B1201 or call (708) 534-4090 and ask for the Coordinator of Disability Services. Students will be required to provide documentation of any disability when an accommodation is requested.

Attendance policy:

THIS CLASS MOVES ALONG AT A RAPID PACE. YOUR ATTENDANCE IS VERY IMPORTANT AS IS YOUR ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN DISCUSSIONS. EXCESSIVE ABSENCES WILL RESULT IN A REDUCED LETTER GRADE OR IN EXTREME CASES NO CREDIT FOR THE CLASS.

COMS 561 [Fall 2008] -- Weekly Lecture/Discussion Topics

(With assignments for the week's classes.)

Week (dates)

Topics and Assignments

Wk. 1 – Monday 9/7 No Class – Labor Day Holiday

Wk. 2 – Monday 9/14

1. Communication technology and its social impact, a brief survey — definitions nature/function and directions;
2. Warm ups: introductions, brainstorming, alphabet soup, agree/disagree groups
3. Key words of the information age
4. Technology goals and human values — people first?
5. Review Syllabus and Schedule

Assignment (see Assignment for next class)

Wk. 3 – Monday 9/21

1. Review first session and completion of first agenda
2. Preview of first short paper topic: *Technology and the Workplace*. **Due Monday 9/28**
3. Discussion of articles you brought in) and handouts from popular press (technology developments and projected impact): What did you find?
4. Mini Poll #1 – brief discussion
5. Discuss the nature of readings: Crowley & Heyer *Communication In History*, (Particularly look at Preface and Forward as well as Chapter on “Orality”, page 66-72.)
6. First Internet activities begin.
7. Work Groups assigned and discussion of topics

Assignment:

- a) All responses to mini poll should be received by 9/21 - 1:00 p.m. via WebCT. (Do not send responses to my personal email)
- b) **Bring in one or two articles from popular press on new developments in communications or information technologies and their potential impact. (Internet)**

- c) **Readings:** Handouts, **Crowley & Heyer**, Preface, Forward, Introduction to Part I and Part II, Chapters 5, 8 & 9, ("origins of Writing," "Writing and the Alphabet Effect", and "Orality, Literacy and Modern Media," Other readings may be handed out in class.
- d) **Write a 3–5 page paper (see above for details) for presentation and discussion on Monday 9/28).** Topic is social impact of communication technology in the workplace/work. Pick a technology and discuss its social impact (on people's lives), or take a stand on an issue with regard to communication technology in the workplace and propose a solution. Use and cite (footnote, APA style) at least three sources.
- e) **Respond to e-mail** sent by instructor that includes mini-poll #1.

Bonus question: How big is the Internet and web? How fast are they growing? (Bring to class)

Wk. 4 – Monday 9/28

1. The Internet and the Web: Pervasiveness and the Issues.
2. Review basics of Internet/WWW and internet assignments.
3. Discuss student papers on work/workplace and communications technology.
4. Review of Reading Assignments – Negroponte intro and focus on C&H Ch. 13.
5. Workplace/work and technological orientation knowledge, values, critical and applied skills: What is Literacy for 21st Century?
6. Relation of Humans with technology (extensions), why people adopt technology. Impact of com. technology on relationships, jobs, work, economy, politics.

Assignment:

- a) Read **Crowley & Heyer**, Introduction to Part III and Chapter 13 "The Invention of Printing" and Chapter 14 "The Rise of Reading."
- b) Second paper on *Communication Technology as Educational Issue*, due **Monday, October 19**, 3–5 pages — same specifications as first paper.
- c) Remember Internet/www assignment is due week 9. You should be beginning web searches on selected topics that could relate to your final paper or the short papers!

Wk. 5 – Monday 10/5

- 1) Discussion of readings from **Negroponte and Crowley & Heyer** – focus on Interfaces (Negroponte)
- 2) Technology and interpersonal communications
 - a) structures of human consciousness and/or
 - b) Computers and people-computer communications – more about computers

- 3) Contemporary Issues – identification and discussion.

Assignment:

- a) Read **Crowley & Heyer**, Introduction to Part IV and Part V & Chapter 20 “The Telephone Takes Command,” Chapter 22 “Time, Space and the Telegraph,” 26 “Early Motion Picture,” 26 “Early Motion Pictures.”
- b) **Pick a topic and propose a term/research paper (7-10 pages) to be discussed last week of classes and handed in last class period. Provide a brief (paragraph or two) description of your proposed final paper by week 6 (10/6) including 2-3 sources/references of the kind to be used or which inspires the paper.**

Wk. 6 – Monday 10/12

- 1) Discussion of readings: What is mass society? How did we used to think of wireless? What was wireless? What do we think of it as now? Was it a really “golden age” of programming?
- 2) Preview 2nd Paper on Communications *Technology as an Educational Issue* (**Due 10/19**).
- 3) Current trends in communications technologies and impact; diffusion of innovation, access, distance learning.

Assignment

- a) **Final paper proposal paragraph due this week.**
- b) Internet Assignments Due 10/9 – send URL by e-mail to instructor.
- c) Readings: C&H Introduction to Part VI and chapters 28, “Advertising and the Idea of Mass Society,” 29, “Wireless World,” and 31, “The Golden Age of Programming”.
- d) Work on/organize short paper #2 on Technology and Impact on Education or as an Educational Issue. – **DUE 10/19**

Wk. 7 – Mon. 10/19

- 1) Discuss readings from Negroponte (Interfaces if not covered) and Crowley & Heyer.
- 2) Literacy in the 21st Century (Group Exercise and Mini-Lecture).
- 3) Work Groups (assignment work has begun) presentations December 7.

Assignment:

- a) Read **Crowley & Heyer**, Introduction to Part VII and Chapters 34 (The New Languages), 36 (Television Transforms News), 38 (Two Cultures - Television versus Print).
- b) Final short paper #3 due Monday 11/16

Wk. 8 Monday 10/26

- 1) **Presentation/discussion of second paper on Technology & Education**
- 2) Discuss readings Crowley & Heyer
- 3) The communications revolution here and around the world.
- 4) Introduction to Satellite Communications

Assignment:

- a) Read Crowley & Heyer, Introduction to Part VIII and Chapter 41 “Popularizing the Internet,” and 43 “The World Wide Web.”
- b) Continue research for Work Group presentations.

Wk 9 Mon 11/2

1. Satellite Communications continued
2. Blog assignments due via email to instructor (Send URL via WebCT)
3. Workgroup breakouts. (research/discussion)

Wk 10 Mon 11/9

1. Preview for third paper: communication technology in home, international/global issues or comparable area of social impact due **11/16**
2. Technology instruction

Field Visit: (*schedules permitting*)

1. Visit to library to meet experts in information management: "The new information environment: knowledge and access" (tentative)

Wk 11 & 12 Mon 11/16 and 11/23

1. Discuss readings in Negroponte and Crowley & Heyer.
2. Work Group Assignment assistance

Assignment:

- a) **Final short paper #3 due Monday 11/17** – Technology impact on the home (or on International Affairs or some selected equivalent impact in another sphere i.e. legal, economic, religious, political, etc.)
- b) Optional/Extra Credit

Wk 13 & 14 Mon 11/30 and 12/7

1. The communications future and the future of the future
2. What should we value? What should we expect?
3. Summary Presentations/Discussions of Final Papers
4. Workgroup breakout

Assignment:

- a) Final paper due December 7.

Wk 15 Mon. 12/14

- 1) Work Group Presentations

Assignment:

- a) *Remember final paper is due no later than Monday, December 7. Final paper discussions on Monday December 7. (from notes or final paper.)*

Assignments/Suggestions for Internet:

Watch Your Time on the Net; devote no more than 15–20% of your time to Net access

- ◆ If necessary activate your GSU e-mail address. You can set this to forward e-mail to any account you desire. You will need access to e-mail to fulfill assignments and to communicate to the instructor and possibly other students.
 - ◆ Use mail programs such as Netscape Messenger, MS Outlook, AOL, or other. Surf the web – normally through a browser such as Netscape Communicator or Navigator or MS Internet Explorer. See if you can, if you have not, set up an address book.
 - ◆ Get help at www.govst.edu/commcentral or Big Dummies Guide to the Internet and other help on-line
 - a) WebCT will be utilized for work group assignments, upload PowerPoint slides, files and IP addresses, etc. for your group. Each group will have a closed communication channel specific to their group to communicate ideas and share information.
 - c) If you have not used WebCT before, it will be important for you to complete the brief tutorials available at
http://www.govst.edu/elearning/default.aspx?id=13618&ekmense1=c580fa7b_26_34_13618_6
- You will only need to know how to use the discussion and email tools at this point, so you only need to look at the tutorials related to these items.